Intelligence Considerations
For the JRTC Search and Attack

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The key to a battalion's success at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), as well as on potential low-intensity battlefields around the world, is knowing the enemy—how he fights, his strengths and weaknesses, and how to minimize the former and capitalize on the latter. But how does a battalion S-2 find an elusive, dedicated, and skillful indigenous force operating in familiar terrain on a low-intensity battlefield, or during the search and attack mission at the JRTC?

To the S-2, finding this kind of enemy may seem like an impossible task, because few publications offer help with this specific type of battalion S-2 function. In the absence of specific guidance, he simply applies current doctrine to the search and attack mission. Since the enemy force is small and elusive, attention to detail is important.

In preparing for the search and attack mission, the commander must first develop the intelligence picture. Then the commander, the S-3, and the S-2 work together closely to develop a cohesive plan for destroying the enemy force. To do this they must maintain open and continuous communication with each other throughout the operation. Since finding the enemy during search and attack is often difficult, the commander and his staff must also be prepared to execute their plan against an alternate target or targets of opportunity that may appear.

On the basis of the initial intelligence information, the S-2 identifies the enemy's strengths and vulnerabilities. In turn, the commander selects the specific enemy vulnerability he wants to exploit and determines the decisive point on the basis of the S-2's recommendations. Then he begins to develop the battle picture—his intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB).

To defeat the OPFOR in the search and attack, the battalion IPB must target an OPFOR vulnerability, not necessarily the force itself. By attacking a vulnerability, the battalion forces the enemy out of his normal operating mode, gains the initiative, and allows the maneuver commander to defeat the enemy on favorable terms.

For example, if the S-2 determines that the enemy force's logistical system is not well established, secure, and strong, the battalion targets that system. In a search and attack against a dismounted force working in small groups, the target could be an enemy supply point. The size of the targeted supply point determines the size of the enemy force likely to be defending or operating it, and also determines the size force that will be used to attack it. The next step is to determine the time it will take the enemy to move the target once it has been compromised. For purposes of this discussion, I will use the example of a battalion supply point (BSP) defended by a platoon-size enemy element and assume that the enemy can move the entire BSP site within six hours.

After the commander identifies what he knows about the enemy, he then determines the additional information he needs. The answers to these specific questions become his priority intelligence requirements (PIRs)—pieces to the puzzle that, once supplied, will complete the picture and enable him to attack. Since the established PIRs will determine both the planning process and the collection effort, they must be put in order of priority and then posted so that all elements of the force can be geared for meeting them. Once the initial PIRs have been identified, the S-2 must continually update them. The new PIRs often generate still more questions that must be considered in this ongoing process. The S-2 section is often advised to do the IPB in isolation without input from the other staff sections, but this isolated planning usually ends with the S-3 developing courses of action without considering the enemy. The result is usually a poor plan for the search and a failure of the attack.

The S-2 determines the named areas of interest (NAIs) on the battlefield. Through the IPB process, he recommends the areas where he believes the BSP is located. He bases his decision on current opposing force doctrine and available intelligence—including mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time (METT-T) with the emphasis on terrain, weather, and local civilian support. This allows the commander and the S-3 to develop a plan for a search and attack against a suspected target location.

During the staff planning process, each staff member, including the special staff, must help the S-2 develop the enemy situation template. The S-2 should bring in the specialty platoon leaders during this planning phase and tap their expertise. The leaders of the mortar, air defense, TOW, and engineer platoons can all provide valuable information in their respective fields. This is especially important in the search and attack because of the lack of a doctrinal, predictable enemy. Although this makes it difficult for the S-2 to template, he can template enemy weapons and then adjust them to the terrain.

During the IPB process, the S-2, along with the S-3, develops the reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) plan—the commander's tasking document by which he plans to find the enemy. The staff must complete the R&S plan early enough to ensure that those tasked with collection of data have enough time to complete their reconnaissance once they have been given the mission. The S-3 must brief the R&S plan as part of the operations order. Since reconnaissance is the unit's primary mission during the initial phase of search and attack, this relationship between the S-2 and the S-3 is critical.

In developing the R&S plan, the S-2 must consider all available assets within the task force. One of the most frequently under-used reconnaissance assets organic to an infantry battalion is the infantry company. The S-2 should exploit his advantages so he can see the enemy properly and identify potential high-value target locations. The S-2 must task his primary intelligence collectors against his priority NAI. In our example, the S-2 would task his battalion scouts against the suspected BSP location. A good way of finding the target is to create a "find force" with that sole mission. This force could consist of several collection assets, including an infantry company that would provide its command and control, security, and—if needed—firepower.

Important parts of the R&S plan are collection times and reporting requirements. Sending a collector to observe an NAI after it is too late for his information to influence the maneuver plan, or with no clear reporting requirements, is a waste of time and effort. Several assets can be attached to the battalion task force, and the S-2 must consider all of them

when developing his R&S plan. A number of potential assets are either organic, task organized, or can be made available to a battalion:

- Infantry companies.
- Battalion scouts.
- TOW platoon.
- Company fire support teams.
- Air defense artillery (ADA) platoon.
- Engineer platoon.
- Ground surveillance radar/REMBASS.
- CI/IPW teams.
- Logistics convoys.
- Medics (front-line ambulances).
- U.S. Marine Corps FCTs.
- Q-36 radar.
- Armor.
- Army aviation.
- U.S. Air Force.
- Military police.

The S-2 cannot simply give his PIRs to a collector and expect him to interpret them. Before any element engages in reconnaissance activities, the S-2 must provide a templated target sketch that is based on available enemy doctrine and current information. Without this sketch, the collectors will not be able to pinpoint the target effectively. The S-2 uses this doctrinal sketch along with information provided by the collectors to update the commanders who must attack the objective.

In addition to the doctrinal sketch, the S-2 must translate PIRs into specific information requirements (SIRs) for the intelligence collectors. The S-2 develops indicators that, when identified, will answer the SIRs. The S-2 tailors these indicators on each NAI and gives them to the collectors. It is his responsibility to provide these indicators for each subject or activity addressed in his PIRs; the collectors can then report incidents instead of trying to answer questions. Once the S-2 finalizes the R&S plan, the commander approves it, and the S-3 tasks the appropriate support agencies. The battalion is now ready to accomplish its mission of finding and finishing the enemy.

Once the R&S plan is complete, the S-2 determines the gaps in his collection effort, and the gaps become the request for intelligence information (RII) that he sends to higher headquarters for answers. Sometimes a unit's higher headquarters is the only source of the answer to a particular question. This combination of tasking organic and attached assets with the R&S plan and sending RIIs to higher headquarters becomes the battalion's collection plan. As the unit's collection manager, the S-2 controls the collection assets and also requests further information.

As the battalion implements its R&S plan, the S-2 must deliberately track the battle and maintain an accurate incident map. The S-2 tracks all incidents as they occur, no matter how insignificant they may seem at the time. He plots these incidents in an orderly fashion to ease future pattern analysis to develop the enemy's operating scheme of maneuver. This gives the commander the freedom to adjust his maneuver plan.

A key part of being able to see the battlefield is the resolution at which the S-2 tracks the battle. For a light infantry battalion, the standard 1:50,000-scale map does not always provide the detail the S-2 needs, especially during the orders planning process or aviation unit briefings. The S-2 uses all available resources to track the battle more accurately and provide the proper terrain information to all personnel. These resources include 1:25,000-scale maps, sectional map blowups, land satellite photography, and aerial imagery.

The S-2, or other responsible individual, must debrief all possible intelligence sources on the battlefield. He must include the assets that are not normally considered prime collectors. Medics, convoy drivers, aviators, ADA teams, infantry patrols, and scouts can all provide pieces of the picture. These groups or individuals see many things on the battlefield that they may not recognize as valuable until they are asked specific questions.

The most important aspect of developing battlefield intelligence may be reporting and dissemination. Timely, accurate, and complete reports on the enemy (SALUTE format—size, activity, location, unit, time, equipment) are essential to the commander. Without them, he cannot properly influence the battle. Often the initial contact reports are incomplete; tactical operations centers, leaders, and radio telephone operators must be ruthless in following up on them as the situation stabilizes. Just as important as accurate reporting is timely dissemination from the TOC to the intelligence collectors. Once the enemy target is pinpointed, reporting and dissemination allow the commander to implement his plan to attack and destroy it.

In summary, if the battalion is to succeed in destroying an enemy force during the search and attack, it must first succeed in finding the enemy. This means using all its available assets, including maneuver forces in the reconnaissance mode. The entire staff must be involved in the IPB process. The unit must first identify a target point where it can exploit an enemy vulnerability and then develop and implement an R&S plan that pinpoints this target. Finally, the unit must accurately report all information to the TOC for analysis and dissemination. This processed information is fed back to the collectors, and the R&S plan is updated. During the search and attack, intelligence is a slow methodical process that, if properly approached, gives the commander the best opportunity to destroy the critical enemy nodes and allows him to dictate the course of the battle.

The S-2 develops a plan to find the enemy and ensures that the units report all information to the TOC, where the true analysis takes place. Dissemination of information down to the users is equally crucial; it becomes the final payoff for the S-2. Attention to detail is the S-2's key ally while conducting the search and attack.

Through a successful training plan, the entire battalion becomes proficient in the orders development process, R&S planning, battle tracking, reporting, and dissemination. As part of this training plan the entire staff must exercise these skills during all training events until they become second nature. This ensures that the battalion will properly conduct intelligence operations in its search and attack missions. Although these intelligence operations are difficult, the S-2 can ensure a successful mission by applying the current published doctrine to the METT-T factors and continually developing the battlefield as more information becomes available.

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To the New Mortar Platoon Leader

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The transition from light infantry rifle platoon leader to mortar platoon leader is one of the most difficult job progressions for a lieutenant. He must go from company operations to battalion, from direct fire to indirect, from dismounted movement to mounted, and from combat operations to combat support. Unfortunately, most lieutenants moving into this job are poorly prepared, even if they are school trained, and very few commanders have the mortar experience to serve as mentor for them.

If you are one of these lieutenants, I would like to share some quick lessons from my experience that should at least point you in the right direction.

During my tenure as a mortar platoon leader, I found the following five areas critical: tactical proficiency, technical proficiency, fire direction center (FDC) operations, maintenance, and staff integration.

Tactical Proficiency. Mortar platoon tactics differ a great deal from those used in a rifle platoon. Essentially, a mortar platoon has only three maneu-